

CRESTONE SPIRITUAL ALLIANCE

C/O CHRISTIAN DILLO
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Dan Dallas, Supervisor
Rio Grande National Forest
1803 W. Highway 160
Monte Vista, CO 81144

December 28, 2017

Dear Supervisor Dallas:

Thank you for continuing to seek public input on the revision of the Rio Grande National Forest management plan. We, the Crestone Spiritual Alliance (CSA), are a coalition of 24 spiritual, practice and religious organizations that attract approx. 25,000 visitors and practitioners annually to the Crestone-Baca area.

In addition to this letter, we are re-submitting our letter from August 1, in which we explained our view of the CSA's presence and relevance in the Crestone-Baca area and our particular relationship to the Rio Grande National Forest lands.

We are strongly supporting the conservation designations included in Alternative D.

We are grateful to see the Sangre de Cristo Recommended Wilderness Additions (Butterfly Creek-Miller Creek, Cotton Creek, Kit Carson Peak, and Blanca Peak) included in Alternatives B and D.

As we have stated before, the Kit Carson Peak and Cotton Creek-Crestone areas in particular are integral to our activities. Some of our member organizations depend on these areas for drinking water and wilderness practices. However, the importance of these areas is not just or even primarily in being a resource to our particular human activities. In our time of climate disruption and species extinction, their pristine wildness and elemental quality has a transformative potential. Visibly healthy and thriving ecosystems, in which humans choose to interfere as little as possible, have a spiritual significance. They have the capacity to re-mind us. They present us with the possibility of a mind that intuitively recognizes and respects that our own thriving depends on the thriving of all beings. Together with all beings we co-create the ecosystem we are (only a) part of.

Conservation and regeneration can be one outcome of this co-creating; exploitation and degradation can be one outcome of this co-creation. Given that so much of our human activity in the world leads to the latter outcome, we are emphatically requesting that you choose Alternative D.

We feel strongly that oil and gas development must be prohibited in all the recommended wilderness areas, special interest areas and other conservation areas

identified in Alternative D. These activities endanger our most precious resource, water, and contribute directly to climate change.

We understand that economic development and tourism are important in the region of the RGNF. However, at this historic juncture, where biological field studies and climate science are telling us that global ecosystems are approaching dangerous tipping points in their ongoing degradations, it is a moral (and, yes, also long-term economic) imperative to preserve and protect as many healthy wild lands as we can.

We, therefore, support all of the designations in Alternative D. We would like to see at the very least the Carnero and Jim Creek Native Fish Areas, the Chama Basin Watershed Protection Area, the Spruce-Osier connectivity area, and the expanded La Ventana Special Interest Area (SIA) designated as recommended wilderness. In addition, with the wildlife corridor between the La Garita Wilderness and the Collegiades and Sangre de Cristo mountain ranges in mind, we think it is essential now to help fill the largest gap in protected areas in the Southern Rockies and go forward with the proposed Antora Meadows Recommended Wilderness.

The wilderness recommendations in Alternative D are backed up by careful research and intend to protect both endangered species such as the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout and unique cultural and geographical features. This makes sense!

Part of our work as spiritual and educational organizations is to encourage people to find new and beneficent ways of relating to themselves, one another as fellow humans, and the natural world as a whole. We don't just live *in* and make use *of* nature, we *are* nature. We think it is crucial that our *being nature* be expressed in at least the most vulnerable and ecologically instrumental portions of the Rio Grande National Forest.

Thank you for taking interest in our perspective and considering our suggestions.

Sincerely,



Christian Dillo

Crestone Mountain Zen Center
Director, Resident Teacher
Crestone Spiritual Alliance, Member



Matthew Crowley

Shumei International Institute
Operations Manager
Crestone Spiritual Alliance, Chairman

List of member organizations that could be reached in a timely manner to explicitly endorse this letter:

1. Chamma Ling
2. Crestone End of Life Project
3. Crestone Mountain Zen Center
4. Haidakhandi Universal Ashram
5. Mangala Sri Bhuti
6. Manitou Foundation
7. Manitou Institute & Conservancy
8. No Old Age & Death
9. Nur Ashki Jerrahi Sufi Community
10. Pundarika Foundation
11. Shakti Sharanam Yoga Shala
12. Shumei International Institute
13. Spiritual Life Institute aka Nada Hermitage
14. Sri Aurobindo Learning Center
15. Subud SLV
16. Way of Nature
17. White Jewel Mountain